

Frontline First: Why L&D Must Reinvent Itself for the People Who Keep the Business Running

GOAT LEARNING®



By redesigning learning around accessibility, relevance, workflow integration, and real human support, L&D can transform frontline employees from an overlooked audience into the engine of operational excellence.

Walk into any store, hospital, factory floor, call center, or logistics hub.

You'll see people moving fast.
Solving problems.
Serving customers.
Keeping operations alive.

And you'll also see something else:
they don't have time for your learning platform.

Not because they don't care.
But because learning, as traditionally designed, has never been built for them.

Frontline employees don't sit at a desk.
They can't disappear into a classroom.
They don't have protected time.
Their performance is immediate, visible, constant.

And yet they're the workforce most impacted by complexity, customer expectations, new tools, new safety

standards, and now AI-driven changes in daily work.

If L&D wants to stay relevant, it must confront this truth:

Frontline workers are no longer a learning segment. They are the learning priority.

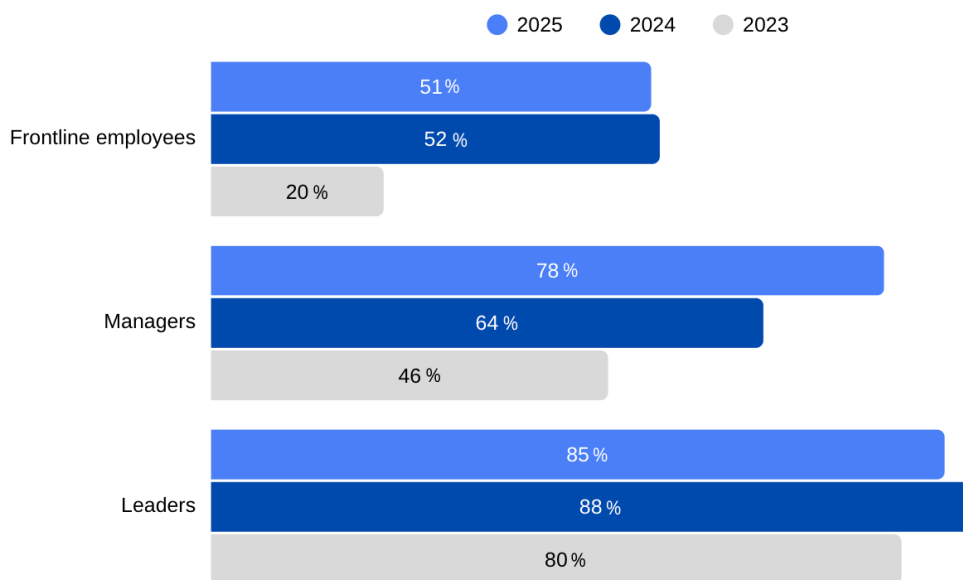
The Frontline Is Changing Faster Than Anyone Expected — And Their Skills Must Follow

Frontline roles are not what they used to be.

Jobs once defined by repetition now include digital operations, troubleshooting, automation oversight, and customer problem-solving at a level that would have required supervision just a few years ago.

But while the work has evolved, most learning environments haven't.

Regular GenAI usage across worker levels (in %)



AI at Work, 2025 (n=10,635); AI at Work, 2024 (n=13,102); AI at Work, 2023 (n=12,898); BCG analysis.

Note: Regular users = people that use AI several times a week or daily.



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This creates a growing performance gap:

- procedures change faster than employees are trained
- skills decay rapidly when not reinforced
- workers face new expectations without new guidance
- customer interactions demand higher judgment and empathy
- AI is entering frontline workflows faster than people understand it

For L&D, the implication is clear: **frontline learning must focus on adaptability, not just task mastery.**

Skill development can't be episodic; it must be continuous, contextual, and instantly applicable.

Time Is the Real Constraint — Not Motivation

Frontline employees aren't disengaged. They're overloaded.

They don't have long blocks to sit and learn.

They can't scroll through a catalog. They don't want abstract theory.

They want:

- learning that fits the shift
- guidance that appears exactly when needed
- content that's short, clear, and visual
- training that doesn't slow them down

This explains why more than half of frontline workers forget their last lesson quickly, and many find the training “too

difficult to access” or “not usable on the go.”

If learning requires time they don't have, it won't happen.

This is where L&D must break with tradition:

the frontline doesn't need more content — it needs frictionless access to the right content at the right moment.

Frontline Learning Must Be Mobile, Bite-Sized, and Embedded in Work

The frontline environment dictates the frontline learning model.

The winning formula is becoming unmistakable:

Mobile-first

Training must be accessible on any device, at any moment, even offline.

Microlearning

Short, focused bursts designed to be consumed between tasks.

Workflow guidance

QR codes on machines, checklists, job aids, and AI assistants that help in real time.

Adaptive delivery

Content that evolves depending on errors made, tasks performed, and skills demonstrated.



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Manager coaching

Still the #1 driver of frontline skills development — but massively underserved.

This is not a convenience choice.
It is the only way to build competence in environments where every minute counts.

AI Opens a New Era for Frontline Enablement — If L&D Uses It Strategically

AI has the potential to become the most transformative learning tool the frontline has ever had.

Imagine:

- real-time recommendations based on observed behavior
- instant troubleshooting guidance
- automated translation for multilingual teams
- micro-simulations for safety or customer scenarios
- adaptive workflows that show the next best action
- personalized tips after each task, not each quarter

These are no longer futuristic concepts.
They are being deployed today.

But there's a catch:
84% of organizations still aren't using AI-enabled training for frontline teams because L&D lacks the skills to deploy it effectively.

This makes AI not only an opportunity — but a capability gap within L&D itself.

To support the frontline, L&D must first upskill... L&D.

Managers Are the Multiplier — and They Need Help

No technology replaces the human role of frontline managers.

They onboard, coach, clarify, calm, correct, motivate.

They are the learning experience.

Yet frontline managers often receive little support for:

- coaching skills
- digital tools
- AI literacy
- performance conversations
- diagnosing skill gaps

And 75% of frontline training today still depends on them.

For L&D, this means:

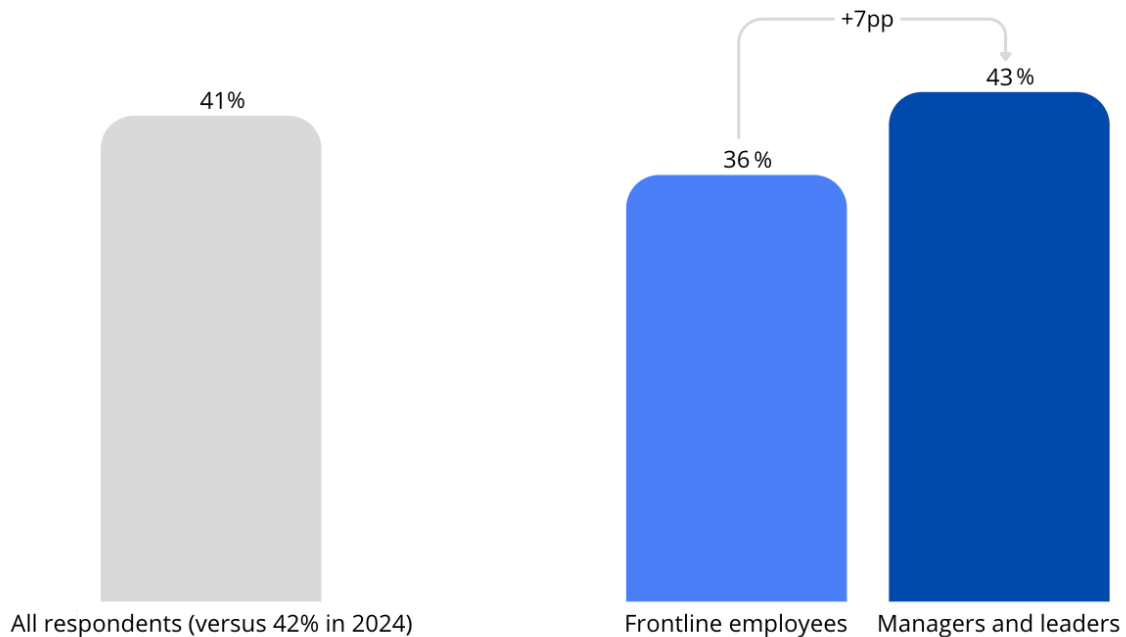
- building manager-specific enablement
- creating coaching playbooks
- delivering in-the-flow guidance
- sending manager insights on team performance and skill decay
- equipping them with AI-powered support tools

A frontline learns at the speed of its managers.

If managers rise, teams rise.



Share of respondents who think their job will certainly or probably disappear entirely in the next ten years



AI at Work, 2025 (n=10,219); BCG analysis

Note: Respondents who answered “certainly” or “probably” to the question.

The Human Impact: Confidence, Stability, and Retention

Frontline employees operate under constant pressure — customers waiting, machines running, safety risks, unpredictable situations.

Learning done right has an enormous human impact:

- higher confidence
- reduced errors
- faster problem-solving
- lower stress
- safer operations
- stronger sense of competence
- greater attachment to the organization

And perhaps most importantly, it reduces turnover — a critical pain point for frontline-heavy industries.

When employees feel supported in the moments that matter, they stay.

The Frontline Is Not a Learning Afterthought. It Is the Learning Frontier.

Frontline teams have been underserved for decades — not out of neglect, but out of misalignment. Learning was built for desks. Work was not.

But the frontier has shifted.

Today's frontline is digital, dynamic, customer-facing, and increasingly AI-enabled. Their skills shape brand, safety, efficiency, and trust.

- AI-augmented support
- skills-based personalization
- manager enablement
- unified platforms
- continuous learning loops

If L&D wants to lead the next decade, it must design for the people who move the business, not just those who manage it.

The frontline isn't the last audience L&D should think about.

That means:

- mobile-first experiences
- micro-content in-flow

It's the first.

Because when the frontline grows, the business grows.

And when L&D builds for them, it proves—not in theory, but in impact—what learning is truly for.

When frontline teams can't learn the way learning is designed, learning has to change.

If you're rethinking how L&D supports the people who keep operations running, reach out to us at emilie@goat-learning.com.

Frontline learning has to fit the shift—not the syllabus.

Contact us at emilie@goat-learning.com to explore how learning can be embedded directly into frontline workflows.

Frontline capability grows at the speed of its managers.

If you're looking to better equip frontline managers as coaches, let's talk at emilie@goat-learning.com.

When learning supports people in the moments that matter, confidence follows.

Reach out at emilie@goat-learning.com to discuss how frontline learning can reduce errors, stress, and turnover.



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À propos de GOAT LEARNING®

GOAT LEARNING® est une société de conseil, d'intégration et d'outsourcing spécialisée dans les solutions EdTech et Learning. Forte de plus de 15 ans d'expérience du marché et de collaborations avec des groupes Global 500 et SBF120, elle accompagne les entreprises dans la conception, la sélection, le déploiement et l'optimisation de leurs écosystèmes de formation. Positionnée comme Trusted Advisor, GOAT LEARNING® conjugue expertise technologique, compréhension fine des enjeux Learning & Development et exigence d'exécution pour transformer les investissements learning en leviers concrets d'upskilling, de développement des skills, d'engagement des apprenants et de performance durable. Son approche s'inscrit pleinement dans les dynamiques de Skills Based Organization, afin d'aider les entreprises à mieux aligner leurs stratégies talents, leurs priorités business et leurs dispositifs de formation. Grâce à un écosystème réunissant plus de 24 partenariats stratégiques et 250+ fournisseurs de contenus, technologies et services, GOAT LEARNING® poursuit une ambition simple : faire de la formation un actif stratégique, mesurable et créateur de valeur pour l'entreprise.

About GOAT LEARNING®

GOAT LEARNING® is a consulting, integration, and outsourcing firm specialized in EdTech and Learning solutions. Backed by more than 15 years of market experience and collaborations with Global 500 and SBF120 companies, it supports organizations in the design, selection, deployment, and optimization of their learning ecosystems. Positioned as a Trusted Advisor, GOAT LEARNING® combines technology expertise, a sharp understanding of Learning & Development challenges, and strong execution capabilities to turn learning investments into tangible drivers of upskilling, skills development, learner engagement, and sustainable performance. Its approach is fully aligned with Skills Based Organization dynamics, helping companies better connect their talent strategies, business priorities, and learning initiatives. Through an ecosystem of more than 24 strategic partnerships and 250+ content, technology, and service providers, GOAT LEARNING® pursues a simple ambition: to make learning a strategic, measurable, and value-creating asset for the business.



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